



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

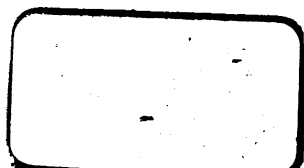
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

1000 (Cleveland)



11.11.11

N

FROM A FLAT HOUSE-TOP



Not in R.D. - Mar 5/1920

MS 6

FROM A FLAT HOUSE-TOP

BY

CHARLOTTE HARDIN

1



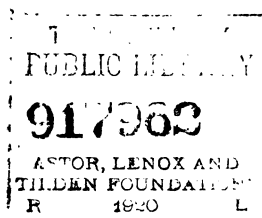
BOSTON

THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY

1920

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Copyright, 1920, by
THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY



The Four Seas Press
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

WILSON
LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

TO
MY MOTHER

Oct 28/1920



The potter slaps the clay upon his wheel; his dreams are true, but his hand has trembled; therefore we have left him bearing clumsy shapes and unlovely outlines.

But come to the shop of the new alchemist; he has there the magic crucible and the undying flame. Gather up the shards of your broken vessels; in each one there lies a golden grain. Out of the broken clay he will retain only what is fine; the fragments will then be shards in truth, and the thread of gold contained in them will be returned to you as a bright elixir. For some there will be but a drop; for others, a goblet full. Some will gulp down their share and go off drunk with dreaming; others will carry the goblets home in their bosoms and sip them secretly in a quiet place. But there will be something for all; each life holds a grain of beauty.

Bring them, then—your outworn loves, your dead passions, your long-past glimpses of peace; the green of old meadows and the echoes of far-off music. They shall be returned to you re-born out of the crucible of the new alchemist.



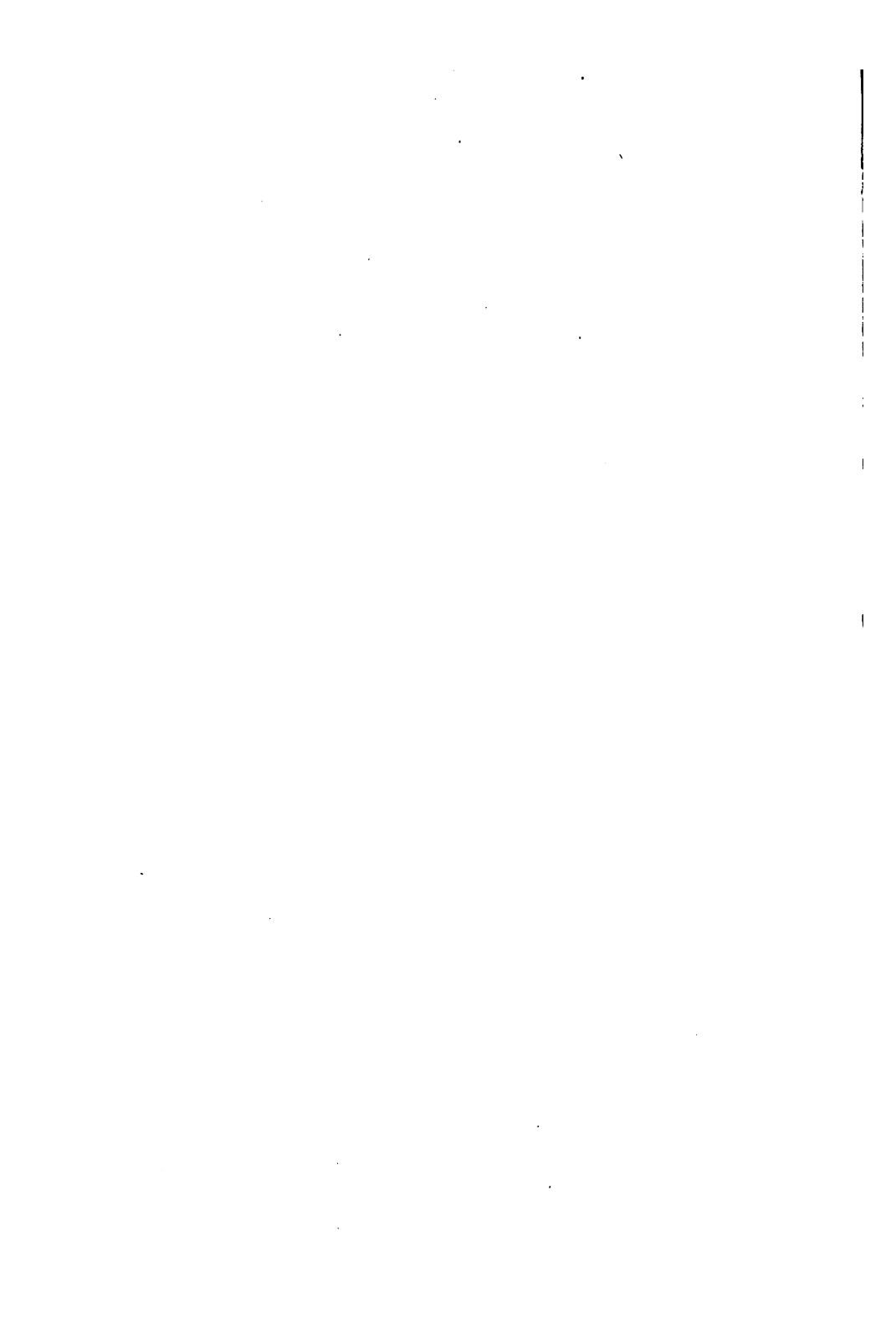
CONTENTS

	Page
WIND SCENTS	13
CHANSON LOUIS XIII.	15
MUSINGS OF A PRE-RAPHAELITE PAINTER	17
A BENT TWIG SPRINGING UPWARD.	19
THE DARK LOVER	20
THE SINGING SHELL.	21
THE GIVER OF THE GIFT DIVINE	22
WHEN I WENT IN SANDALS	23
PIPPA IN THE FACTORY	24
HONEY FROM AFAR	26
THE FAIRY WOODS	27
SUMMER LOVES	29
A FRAGILE SNATCH OF PASSING SONG	31
ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN	32

CONTENTS

	Page
THE BLAZE	33
I LOST THE COLORS OF THE DAWN	34
THE NIGHT WIND	35
TO THE MOST LOVED	36
HARP MUSIC	37
A FANTASY OF DANCE—AT THE ORPHEUM	39
I WAS THE SMALLEST FAIRY	41
THE HONEY BEE	43
THE LESSER LOVES	45
O SOMEONE IN THE DEEP, DEEP WOOD	46
THE REFUSAL	47
THE SUNBEAM	50
SUBTERRANEAN	51
TOO LONG I SAT AT SPARTAN BOARDS	52
THE CARPET	53
PASSION IN THE BALLET—THE FAVORITE SLAVE	55
CARYATID—RODIN	57
FROM A FLAT HOUSE-TOP	59

FROM A FLAT HOUSE-TOP



FROM A FLAT HOUSE-TOP

WIND SCENTS

The songs that the wind has sung,
The scents that the wind has flung
From flowers where they clung
But yesterday—
These are too sweet to linger or delay.

The songs that haunt the past,
The fragrances too faint to last—
Will they never come
Wearily, happily home
To the flowers where they clung,
To the heart of the wind that has sung,
Forever to live in the air,
Forever there?

The dreams that are past and gone!
Is there not one
That will ever come
Wearily, happily home?

Must they forever fade
Into the passing shade
With all the passing fragrance that has clung
In long dead flowers,
And, with the dying hours,
Die with the songs the dreaming wind has sung?

CHANSON LOUIS XIII.

Nay, I cannot love you so—
Now you choose a dragging measure,
Full of pauses, stepping slow
At the flying heels of pleasure.
Come from out your high-walled gloom,
Let us make a holiday
In the meadow's pleasant room
Where the sliding shadows play.
Here in golden splendor high
Butterfly loves butterfly:
Will they live and love forever?—
Never, never!

Still and still you sigh and plead,
Still and still I love you,
While the little breezes speed
Butterflies above you.
Still you love me, while the sun
Stands so high above us:
Butterflies, when day is done,
Who will think to love us?

While there's azure in the sky
Butterfly loves butterfly.
Fluttered pinions in the air
Catch the sunlight, hold it there.
Over the soft-lifting breeze
Now the drooping branches sigh—

Love me now! Beneath the trees
Spread the lightest couch of love,
But above
Let there be no canopy
To obscure the shining skies
Or the shadows, flitting by,
Of the dancing butterflies.

Still and still you sigh and plead,
Still and still I love you,
While the little breezes speed
Butterflies above you.
Still you love me, while the sun
Stands so high above us:
Butterflies, when day is done,
Who will think to love us?

MUSINGS OF A PRE-RAPHAELITE PAINTER

High in the trees
He balances—
Gay-hearted oriole! Fluttering down
Willful and leaf-light with leaves that drift,
Now clear in a rift
Of branch-fringed sky,
Now dim on the brown
Of russet bark—
And hark!
Rare and shy
His notes begin,
First sweet and thin,
Held to a rippling swell that ebbs again—
O for the wax that dulled the sirens' strain!
Birds and a tree-top! Such a combination
Leaves far too much to the imagination.

Here are my colors: how one's thoughts run riot
When any noise disturbs the woodland quiet!
—What silver-gray of lichens—tiny trees
That branch and fork like any forest brother;
Moist green of mosses: deep soft velvets, these,
Tipped with a jester's cap and bells of coral;
And one that grows supine; red-cupped, another:
A creamy tassel fallen from the sorrel:
A spreading fungus, colored orange, gold,
Saffron, all shades of yellow, metal-cold,

Or warm with shifting sunlight—what a study
Beside the toadstool pulp that quivers ruddy!

Another strain!
Up, up he's borne upon his own refrain!
Rollicking tree-tops
Nodding together,
Gladness of bird song,
Blue-skied fair weather!
What if the day stops?
Days are so long!
Under the warm shades
Gay fancies throng.
What if the day fades?
After a night
Tree-tops and birdsong
Welcome the light—
Rollicking tree-tops
Nodding together,
Gladness of birdsong,
Blue-skied fair weather!
He's gone! Oh what a flight, imagination!
Now to my moss and its configuration.

*A bent twig springing upward
From under the weight of a bird
Nods to me over the hedges
That the fluttered wings have stirred.*

*Far afield in the noontide
The bird has sought his will:
Still lie the fluttered hedges,
And my answering heart is still.*

*But far in the dazzling sunlight
A-wing with a joyous bird,
A thought of mine goes straying
That my heart has never heard.*

THE DARK LOVER

When I heard rhymes of a dark lover
I thought they meant his face—
Browned from the sun—a gypsy rover
In some far tropic place.

When I first saw my own dark lover
I knew they meant his eyes,
Where as at night I could discover
Unending mysteries.

And now when love is done and over
I know too true and well
There's many and many a darker lover
More than the rhymes can tell.

THE SINGING SHELL

I name you, love, and all my words
Are murmurous, a leafy throng:
The magic of your memory
Sets all my words to song.

Mine but the fragile shell of verse:
But hearken where, deep hid from view,
The secret murmur of your life
In music speaks anew.

THE GIVER OF THE GIFT DIVINE

The giver of a tawdry gift
Goes strident through the market-place,
And cries his own munificence,
That men may see and know his face.

But when the deeper twilight falls
The giver of the gift divine
Comes through the shadow of the trees
And parts the tangle of the vine,

And by all dim and devious ways
Steals on to the Beloved's place,
And leaves his offering, and flies,
Lest the Beloved see his face.

*When I went in sandals
I never felt the dew;
I wrapped my cloak about me
And caught no hint of you.*

*Cloakless, without sandals—
The very rain seems new,
And every twig that brushes me
Has known the touch of you.*

PIPPA IN THE FACTORY

I who would sing a song
Must turn a machine.
Out in the country
The world's growing green —
Turn again, turn again, creaky machine!
Round and round—
The grass on the ground
Is growing in rings, in rings, they say.
For long ago when the fields were new
The fairies traced them and blessed them with dew
And kissed them with freshness and crowned them
with green—
O faster and faster, my humming machine!

Hum, hum, like the bees
In the locust trees
Where the bunches of flowers heavy with sweet
Drip through the branches to carpet my feet.
And higher than all—
A wanderer rare—
There's a song in the sunlight,
A rhyme in the air.
It floats away, floats away over the green—
Catch it, O catch it, my whirring machine!
Sing of the sky
When the ceiling is low:
Sing the birds homing,
Sing the night coming

Where night-flowers blow.
Bring a soft air,
Blow a sweet air
Out of the open, the night's darkened green—
Catch the air, hold it,
Weave and enfold it—
Filter the day through my dream's golden screen—
O faster and faster, my happy machine!

HONEY FROM AFAR

Here stood the miracle of lofty growth—
A blossomed tree,
Whose fragrant crown above the crests of green
We roamed the woods to see.

Here the wild bees had made a feasting-place,
And led us from afar
To the white circle of new-fallen blooms—
Each bloom a fallen star.

And now, though storms have stripped the blossomed
crown,
The thunder-blasted tree
Still holds a life that stirs its blackened depths.
Made sweet with memory.

The home of bees! The hollow tree holds sweets
From many a flowered star,
All the warm meadows' summer fragrances,
And honey from afar.

THE FAIRY WOODS

Ringed by the sunny-meadowed hills
Where the slow cattle pass,
The fairy woods have sprung to life
And checked the creeping grass.

Young, as the fairy world is young,
The slender pine-trees grow:
The wind throughout their little leaves
Pipes a faint elfin flow.

And the warm earth, thin-carpeted,
Still knows the touch of spring,
Nor through the summer quite forgets
The lore of blossoming.

The tiny heather-bells of pink
And silvery bells of blue,
Ringing on airy leafless stems,
Clouded with lingering dew,

Make a soft mist of lavender
That floats above the moss,
And surges over the faint track
Where the slow cattle cross.

The very wind is delicate,
Fitfully, gayly bold,
And delicate the streaks of sun
That spread their whiter gold.

Now for one last long magic day
I drowse in the pale sun.
Another day, another year,
What fairies have begun

Nature will take. Her ample hand
Will ripen through the earth
Into a fuller richer growth
This miracle of birth.

But for my deep-enchanted eyes
The elfin bells still blow:
Forever delicate and strange
The fairy woods shall grow.

SUMMER LOVES

When I left you, Jeannie,
You had grown unkind;
Jeannie, Jeannie, was the tune
Running in my mind.

Round and round, the little road
Turns upon the hill:
Jeannie, Jeannie, runs the song
Of the mountain rill.

All along the water's edge
Wildflowers are aflame:
Yesterday I met a man
Who told me each one's name.

Sweet lavender and jewel-weed—
(Another little song,
Jeannie, Jeannie, followed me
The water's edge along).

Sun-drops, asters, goldenrod—
The chorus sweeter grew—
Jeannie, they were chiming in
To turn the air from you!

Meadow-queen and Queen Anne's lace—
It needed nothing more—
I could not sing of simple Jean
When queens bowed at my door!

Now "Jeannie" follows me no more:
Ten lovelier names I know;
My summer loves! I know their hearts,
The warm fields where they blow.

And when they lie in wintry sleep
Should Jeannie prove unkind,
The sweet names of my summer loves
Will sing her out of mind!

*A fragile snatch of passing song
Half heard, half guessed,
Floats on the dimming twilight air,
And love lies hushed at rest.*

*Like soft rain through the tender leaves
The sweet airs blend,
So faint that fragrance seems to start
Where sound has met its end.*

*Unseen the rain dies in the night—
Unheard, O song,
Breathe through the darkness, lest love wake,
And sorrow over-long.*

ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN

There was a youth who died too young,
Who spent the silver of his tongue
In scorn of laws and ancient days,
And cut his feet on stony ways.

On his last day and days before,
He kept his couch, to rise no more,
With all his old intentness fine
Perusing "Anne of Geierstein."

It was a volume old and red,
His, when his little curly head
Nodded above it by the flame,
Long past the hour when bedtime came.

Some far-off memories he sought—
Some healing the old volume brought:
But for me, hell's white places shine
When I see "Anne of Geierstein."

THE BLAZE

He called us in, and set ablaze
At once, the fuel of his days.
We cried him back, but more and more
He heaped on his full lifetime's store.

Wild with the glory of the blaze,
He cast in all his future days
To flame an aureole of red
About his beauteous brow and head.

And we—we cowered in the shade,
And stretched our hands half out, afraid:
Some thrust a hand into the blaze,
But could not save his future days.

All this was long ago. Our pile,
With prudent care, will last awhile.
We stir our comfortable blaze,
And speak of warming life's last days.

But there are some whose folded hands
Bear the white scars of long-spent brands:
These see forever the swift grace
Of that bright head and beauteous face.

*I lost the colors of the dawn:
The noonday hours, wheeling by,
Brought ripened fruit and golden grain
And shimmer of a far hot sky.*

*At last, at last the day was gone,
The long time spent: and from the west
I caught a freshened look of life
And knew that dying is the best.*

THE NIGHT WIND

Only the topmost boughs are stirred,
The dark leaves lie asleep.
Only the spring's new branches leap
To the wind's thrilling word.
Unstirred
Sleeps the half-withered leaf
Into whose dreamings creep
Faint breathings of an air too brief
That died with spring.
The topmost branches swing
To the wind's whispering—
The dark leaves lie asleep.

TO THE MOST LOVED

Rumored upon the startled morn
That saw the primal day-spring rise,
And trembling with the latest dawn
That stirs the still pool of the skies—

Love still shall weave its mystic rune
In tapestries as richly spun
As when on some far golden noon
The women sang to Solomon.

Each poignant strain of beauty leaves
Another strain unsung, untrove:
My love binds up its perfect sheaves
And yet remains a different love.

Now, since your sheaves are bound with gold,
And since your eyes reflect the spring,
You link new treasure to the old,
And ripened fruit to blossoming.

The primal day repeats its boon,
And rumored love is newly born;
And through the mystic golden noon
A woman sings to Solomon.

HARP MUSIC

Behind the open golden strings
Hang crimson velvet curtainings,
With heavy fringe of tarnished gold
To hold austere each fluted fold—
Harp-strings lie open to the day,
And where they will the runlets stray,
Within, without the curtained gloom,
And floating through the music-room
Like jets of fountain spray at play—
Harp music is a run-away!
Its tinkling notes disdain to hoard
Their sweetness with a sounding-board;
Lavish they spring from each plucked string,
A fountain plume set shimmering
To opalescent changes fleet:—
A gay patrol rides down the street:
A Spanish lover canters by:
A garland from the Lorelei
Flings down a handful of faint bloom—
And there are flowers in the room.
And if the player, wise and fair,
Wear blue or green, and if her hair
Be yellow—by the amber strings
So easily a mermaid sings!
The notes, like pearls on golden cords,
Drip from the richness of their hoards:
And swift and clear, a mermaid's tear,
A strange sea-sorrow, half a fear,

Whispers its fleeting fairy woe—
A mermaid's harp might whisper so!

Harp-strings are tuned to fairy play—
Harp-strings lie open to the day—
Harp music is a run-away!

A FANTASY OF DANCE

AT THE ORPHEUM

Where the little poplar-trees
Two by two, in mimic state,
Cast their shadows ebonese
On the arching iron gate—

Here, where antique vases hold
Quaintest box-trees, and austere
Figures of the nymphs of old
From the formal hedges peer—

Here two sisters, dancing slow
In the twilight's dim retreat,
Circle, as the shadows grow,
Dip, advance on sandalled feet,

Playing, at the fountain's brink,
Hide and seek, to measure due:
One enscarfed in lilac-pink,
One enveiled in silver-blue.

Pose, repose, and pirouette—
Memory, enchanted muse,
Weaves the gentle air's regret
On a spinet worn with use.

Now the circling pair retreat
In and out the poplar trees,
Drooping o'er their sandalled feet,
Blowing kisses to the breeze.

Through the curtain's velvet gloom,
Memory, enchanted muse,
Show me still the garden's room,
While a spinet worn with use

Quavers from a yellowed page
Its belated roundelay
Of a happy Golden Age
Where the gentle sisters play—

Circling round the fountain's brink—
Hide and seek to measure due,
One ensarfed in lilac-pink,
One enveiled in silver-blue.

*I was the smallest fairy
In a world unknown to men:
You were a rugged giant
Who lived in the Northland fen.*

*Alone in the sunny lowlands,
I spent the years at play,
And listened for the thunder
That came from far away—*

*The echo of your footsteps,
The far-off breaking shock:
I was the snowy marble,
And you, the granite rock.*

*A hundred years of echo,
And then the dreamed-of fear:
I hid in the roots of grasses
For I knew that you were near.*

*The crashing of your footsteps
Rolled to the lowland plain;
You had come to seek the fairy,
But you had come in vain.*

*For down in the roots of grasses
Your great hands could not reach:
You, with your feet of thunder,
And your tongue devoid of speech!*

*I trembled in my safety
And yearned to your mighty sound,
And longed to be held and captured:
Yet I lay close to the ground.*

*And at last your raging footsteps
Rolled back to the Northland fen
For a hundred years of echo,
And so returned again.*

THE HONEY BEE

Shall I, with such an alchemy,
From unenjoyed delight
Transmute a richer treasury
And seal it in the night?
What flowers' deepest fragrances
Know but my searching zest,
Unspent in wanton vagrancies
Upon their satin breast?

For one brief day of long ago
I chose the rover's pace,
When spring's full pools in overflow
Mirrored the world's new face.
The world was new, my heart was new,
And where the brown bees fly
I robbed them of their honey-dew,
And mocked their husbandry.

With ceaseless toil unending springs
Wipe out the one day's grace:
The windy horn of autumn rings
Through June's abandoned place.
I sit beside my honey-comb
And ponder every cell:
The ruddy hearthstone flame of home
Glows in each amber well.

Ah, tender hands that break the store
To sweeten every sense
With garnered flowers that bloomed of yore—
Take your inheritance!
This is your frail life's nourishment—
The richness of my years,—
To stay your young astonishment
And mellow all your fears.

So I, with such an alchemy,
From unenjoyed delight
Fashion for you a treasury
Against the winter's blight.
My flowers' deepest fragrances
Their ardors round you fling,
And spend my unspent vagrancies
To keep eternal spring!

THE LESSER LOVES.

If I have loved the many loves,
Nor held me unto straiter ways,
O call me fickle as the sea
And liken me to April days—

For as the sudden shower falls
From April skies of sunny hue,
The lesser loves, the many loves
Leave Heaven its own unclouded blue.

The shallow wavelets kiss the shore
And dimple in advancing bands
To print a fragile memory
Upon innumerable sands:

But far beyond their shifting play
The depths know no uncertainty:
The ocean's heart forevermore
Gathers a deep tranquility.

O liken me to lesser waves
And let me flatter every shore,
And gather, like the ocean's heart,
Depth upon depth forevermore!

*O someone in the deep, deep wood
Has set me here and there
A cup of wine, a cup of dew,
Bubbled with fairy air.*

*And till I drink the last sweet drop
And drain the last cup dry,
I'm driven through the deep, deep wood,
And home and all goes by.*

THE REFUSAL.

I am an opening bud
Beneath the sun's warm flood,
A blossom for the pleasure of the sun:
The inevitable rose
As blindly grows,
As blindly withers when his light is done.
Yet when on other flowers
He spends his golden hours,
She lays aside her state,
Not desolate:
I crave another fate.
Ah, think you not the spray
That blooms and blooms each May
Wearies of wantoning
With every air of spring?
Or that the cold green birth
Slow-pricking through the earth
Leaves many a sweeter thing
Beneath the spring?
Think you that I would flower
To every passing shower,
To every sunbeam be the answering rose?
And yet—how shall I say
I will not love in May?—
—Here is the song they sing when winter
goes:—

Blossom, blossom, blossom—
Now I kiss your mouth—
Bloom and bloom, my flower,
Blossom like the South,
When the wind of April
Blowing over May
Blows the winter branches
Into rosy spray—
Blows the winter fancies
Far and far away.

I am a closing flower.
I give your love its hour,
Your sun its day:
No other sun shall shine
On love of mine:
I will not bloom and bloom to every May.
The blood that sullen flows
To redden beauty's rose
Bears an unwilling heat
Warm from its deep retreat.
So many a sweeter thing
Lies underneath the spring!
Dim in the winter's lap,
Low with the deadened sap,
Unmoved of urging need,
Life lies asleep in seed,
Remembering
No wantonness of spring.
And so I too would lie

Soft, dreamlessly,
Like any withered rose.
And yet—how shall I say
I should not hear in May
The little song they sing when winter goes?

Blossom, blossom, blossom—
Now I kiss your mouth—
Bloom and bloom, my flower,
Blossom like the South,
When the wind of April
Blowing over May,
Blows the winter branches
Into rosy spray—
Blows the winter fancies
Far and far away.

THE SUNBEAM

You are the flight of countless wings
Of gossamer and vair—
A rainbow stream, a fairy shaft
Through my imprisoned air.

And where is now my strip of sky,
My lattice-chequered tree?—
O too much pain, to gather you
In one bright unity!

SUBTERRANEAN

All that sings itself to sleep
In the twilight sunken deep,
All that changes winter tears
To hidden jewels of the years—

This is all I do not live,
What I could give and never give.
Deepest in my soul they lie—
Wings that never knew the sky.

Deepest in my soul are spent
Unshot arrows, bows unbent:
Dimly substed in the earth,
The golden crown awaits its birth.

*Too long I sat at Spartan boards
And drank from flagons bare,
And crushed the sunny-blossomed wreaths
That you were used to wear.*

*For other labor than your praise
I left you for a space;
And now the winds of all the world
Know not your hiding place.*

THE CARPET

Undulate,
Spring before your master,
Dancer!
Do you know that the new carpet
Spreading its thick colors in homage at his feet
Renders imperfect homage, rebels at all its
edges?

—Leap in, clack the chains that weight your
heavy ceinture,
Flash the shining harness laced over your
flesh,
Lift your cinctured arms: the music rises.

Wonderful, wonderful carpet!
Spirals of crimson aw whirl
Under the stamping clanking
Feet of the dancing girl—

Shimmering wavering parrots
Clutching their perches of pearl
Crushed by the crinkle-soled, pink-stained
Feet of the dancing girl!

Clack, clack,
The parrots are safe—
They are near the centre.
The weight of the harness is nothing,
The body bears it lightly,
Leaping in the air.

The drum, the drum—
Spirals of bronze lead outward
To the border of bursting grapes:
The race begins.
Be still, wreath with your arms,
Bend from your naked middle,
Bend backward, brush the grapes with your
fingers,
Push out your breasts, nipped with cups of
metal,
Laced with cobweb chains of gold:
The plumes of your helmet recover,
Sweep forward, sweep the floor before you.
Clack—the music—the grapes must be ad-
ventured.
Backward a step—presently you will stumble.

At the corner vine meets vine
Twisting together,
Creeping out to the floor,
Running off into air at the point.
At the corner
The dancer runs from the carpet
Over the escaping tendrils,
Plunges from the nearest window
Flashing through the sunlight
Into the courtyard pool:
The weight of her harness drags her under.

In harems too there are obsessions.

PASSION IN THE BALLET

THE FAVORITE SLAVE

He crouches in the corridor
And hears upon the marble floor
The men-at-arms step out, step out,
The heavy cushions tossed about:
And in his ecstasy he hears
A step approach. The darkness clears,
The key has turned, the curtain falls,
And in his ecstasy he crawls
Over the squares of black and white,
And sees—and crouches at the sight—
Her long slim flanks, her crimson vest,
Her bright head with bright metal dressed.
He flinches from her lowered gaze
And waits: the languid music stays.

Upon his knee, upon his feet,—
He hears a reedy summons sweet.
His fingers at her ankles cling,
His fingers at her sandal-string—
In measured time, to measured beat,
Pluck at the bangles of her feet.
Now, as the horns cry out "Arise!"
His hands caress her flattened thighs,
And, led by flutes, slip up her arms—
In measure to her measured charms.

Too long, too long the flutes delay!
Should but a single viol play—
A spring of tightened muscle—then—
Her lips!—The flutes begin again.

The time has changed. A beating doom
Throbs from the 'cello. In the room
The master stands. The drums begin—
The men-at-arms step in, step in.
The thunder breaks—Now, viols, now!—
His lips leap writhing to her brow—

Death, or a darkened corridor
Unchains the mimic from the floor,
From the cold music's meted strain—
Approach, conceded with a chain.

CARYATID

RODIN

My hands hold up my breasts,
Push up my crushed shoulder—
How shall I bear this weight?
(I have asked you only for bread).
You have cut me with knives,
You have lashed my skin with fine long whips
of thread;
There is no breath in my throat.
(I have not asked for the wine.)
I had thought of knives that would sunder
bonds,
But your knives have cut my flesh.
I had thought to toss aside this rock,
To stretch out my arms, to breathe deep and
full.
I would cast on my tunic and be with the
others under the broad shade-tree.

Is this not for me?
Then hold back your knives,
Cast aside the lashes.
(I ask no longer for bread.)
Give me strength.
Let me bear up the rock
Insensate as its bulk.
Let me become as my burden.

Give me strength—
The strength of stone—
To strain eternally,
Without desire,
Without dream.

FROM A FLAT HOUSE-TOP

I.

Finally away from the people,
Finally alone in the dark,
High up on the roof
With my tree close to me!
Now the tears can flow,
Now arms can be stretched out to the sky,
The heart can break in sobs.
O at last to be
Free alike from life and immortality!
To hear no more voices
Save the gentle voice of the wind
Stirring the leaves—
To whisper to the stars,
And droop, mysterious and silent,
In the still heat of noon:
To have no more kisses,
But the slipping touch of the rain:
And to feel no more the vagueness of longing,
But to suffer patiently through drought!
O my tree!
At last, at last to be
Free alike from life and immortality!

II.

In winter we buy warmth,
In summer, ice.
Who can change the seasons?

Love, that I would flee,
Love watches for me in the door-ways,
Dogging my footsteps;
His hands are hot upon me.
O neighbor woman,
You who are longing for love,
Lay your cold hands on my forehead:
Stretch out your cold hands to love,
Entreat him, and he will leave us;
And you, who hate peace,
Shall be at peace.—
But how shall I avoid the door-ways?

III.

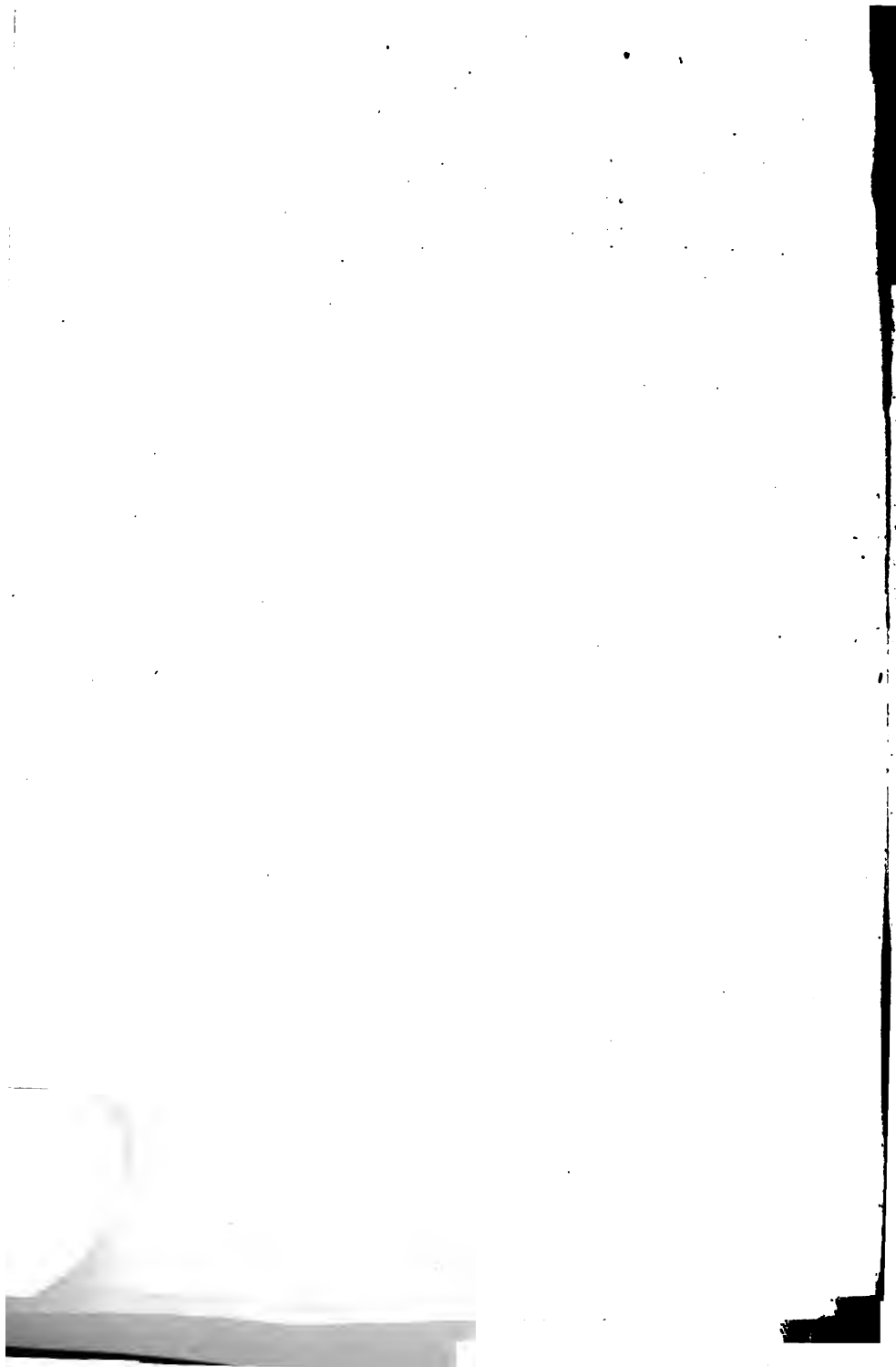
On the roof next to mine
My neighbor plays the mandolin;
But his wife does not sing.
Such a little space lies between us,
Not enough to hold a tree:—
A thin black shaft of deepest night,
Easily stepped over,
But insurmountable without a prelude.
Lacking the prelude,
The player lacks a voice,
And my voice is silent.
Is your silent wife beside you, neighbor?
Send her down into the street,
And I will step over the well of night
And lend you what you need:—
I will lend you my voice first.

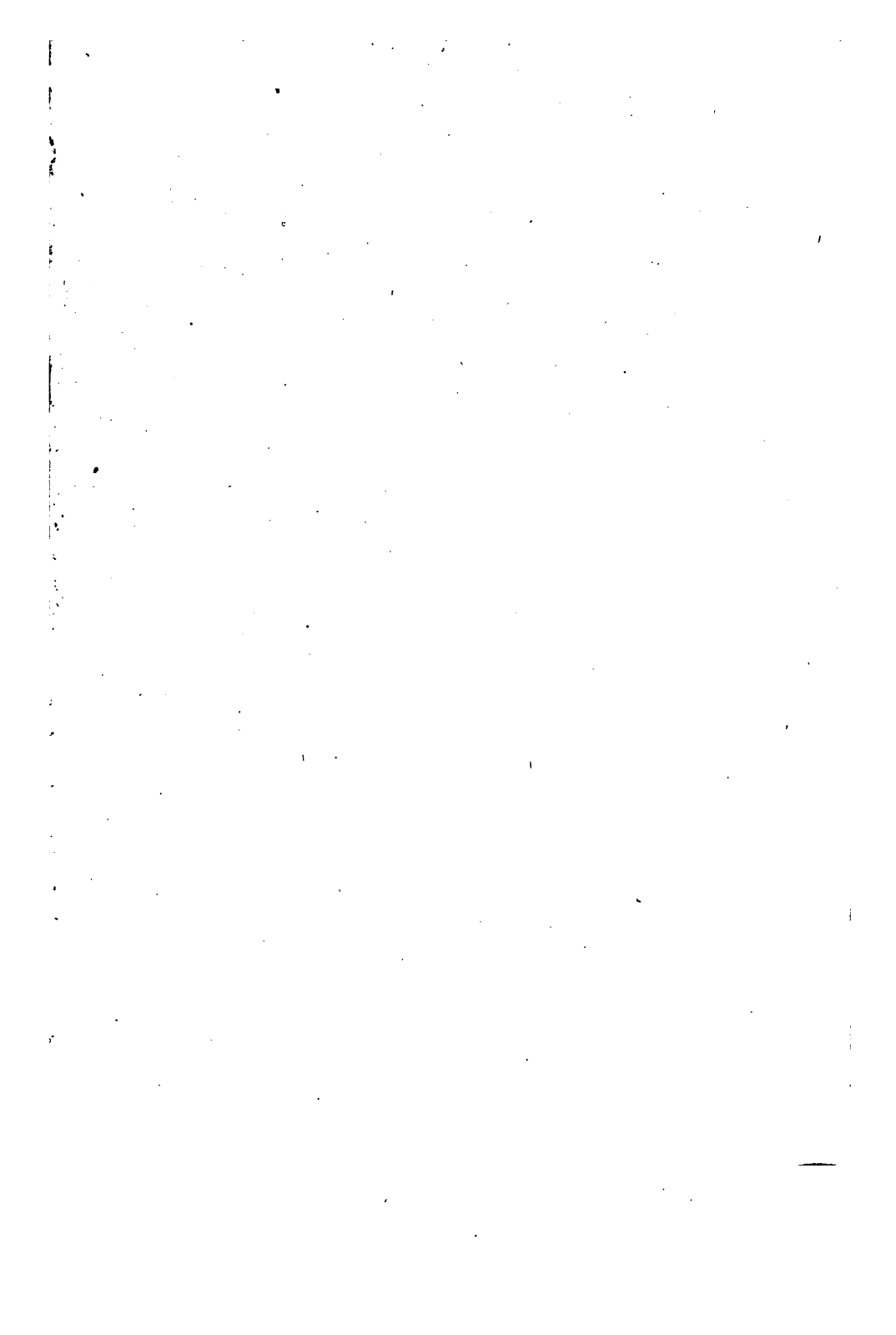
IV.

I will not meet you on the street—
Your mandolin, your mandolin
Can tell me all I long to know,
A little truth, and lies too sweet
To verify upon the street.
Upon the street your mouth is cold,
Your eyes are weary in the light,
Your voice is harsher than the fall
Of tinkling music in the night.
Be voice as soft as voice can be,
It cannot murmur like my tree.
Ah, could I step across the night
An apparition to your sight—
Your mouth might smile less wearily,
And something in you answer me
Unlike the man I will not meet
Upon the street.
Your mandolin's faint tinkle thin
Can tell me all I long to know—
A little truth, and lies too sweet
To verify upon the street.

V.

Tree that I must leave!
I have come at last
To tell you three things:—
There are other roofs under the stars—
There are men whose eyes are not weary—
And there is a love whose hands
Are cool as night's dripping fountains.
Now all the words that I have spoken
Into the darkness
Vanish with the night wind:—
There is but one word
That stars the universe.
O my tree!
At last, at last to be
Made free of life and immortality!





**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

NOV 30 1961	
DEC 1 1961	
DEC 2 1961	
DEC 3 1961	
DEC 4 1961	
DEC 5 1961	
DEC 6 1961	
DEC 7 1961	
DEC 8 1961	
DEC 9 1961	
DEC 10 1961	
DEC 11 1961	
DEC 12 1961	
DEC 13 1961	
DEC 14 1961	
DEC 15 1961	
DEC 16 1961	
DEC 17 1961	
DEC 18 1961	
DEC 19 1961	
DEC 20 1961	
DEC 21 1961	
DEC 22 1961	
DEC 23 1961	
DEC 24 1961	
DEC 25 1961	
DEC 26 1961	
DEC 27 1961	
DEC 28 1961	
DEC 29 1961	
DEC 30 1961	

